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No. 9

Transportation Topics
FOR CONSUMERS
from the Office of Consumer Affairs

SEPTEMBER 1975 / DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION / WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590 / ISSUE NO. 9

COLEMAN URGES MORE SAY FOR CONSUMERS

In support of President Ford's call for greater governmental responsiveness to the concerns of consumers, Secretary of Transportation William T. Coleman, Jr., has directed all agencies within the Department of Transportation to increase citizen involvement in the Department's decisions. Specifically, the Secretary ordered implementation of the following recommendations, which were originally submitted to him by DOT's Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA):

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- DOT operating administrations should use to the fullest practical extent the procedure known as Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR).

[This procedure notifies the public at the earliest possible stage—when the agency is initially considering development of a rule on a particular issue. ANPR is the first possible step in rulemaking, preceding the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) which occurs when the agency publishes a proposed rule that has already been drafted in close-to-final form. Use of ANPR, therefore, allows for significantly greater consumer input in developing regulations, guidelines, and other rules.]

- The time for public comment on an NPR following publication in the *Federal Register* should be a minimum of 45 days whenever possible.

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WHAT IS IT?

You'll be seeing this new sign more and more on State and local highways. If you're not sure of its message, turn to page 3 for further information. One hint: Energy conservation is the goal of the new program heralded by this sign.

NHTSA PLUGS IN REGIONAL HOTLINE FOR CONSUMERS' SAFETY QUERIES

On an experimental basis, DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is establishing a toll-free telephone hotline for consumers living in a 12-state area surrounding Washington, D.C.

The hotline, which is designed to handle safety-related data, is expected to be in operation in October. The phone number will be announced as soon as the lines are hooked up.

The pilot program will be carefully monitored to evaluate successes and problems in its performance.

The hotline project has two objectives: (1) to improve NHTSA's capacity to collect safety-related automotive information from consumers; and (2) to give instant service to consumers with urgent questions about recalls and defects of autos and automotive products.

The hotline, for example, will be equipped to give the defect-history of a used car which a consumer is considering buying. Hotline staff members will also be able to answer questions concerning product recalls.

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FAA INITIATES CONSUMER MAIL LIST

DOT's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is establishing a new consumer mailing list to increase public involvement in the agency's regulatory and planning activities. As the Federal agency charged with aviation safety, FAA regulates the certification of aircraft, airmen, airports, and airways.

The new FAA mailing list will be used to alert interested individuals and consumer groups to hearings, meetings, conferences, and rulemaking activities. Although

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FHWA OFFERS HOW-TO-DO-IT DATA ON SETTING UP CARPOOL PROGRAMS

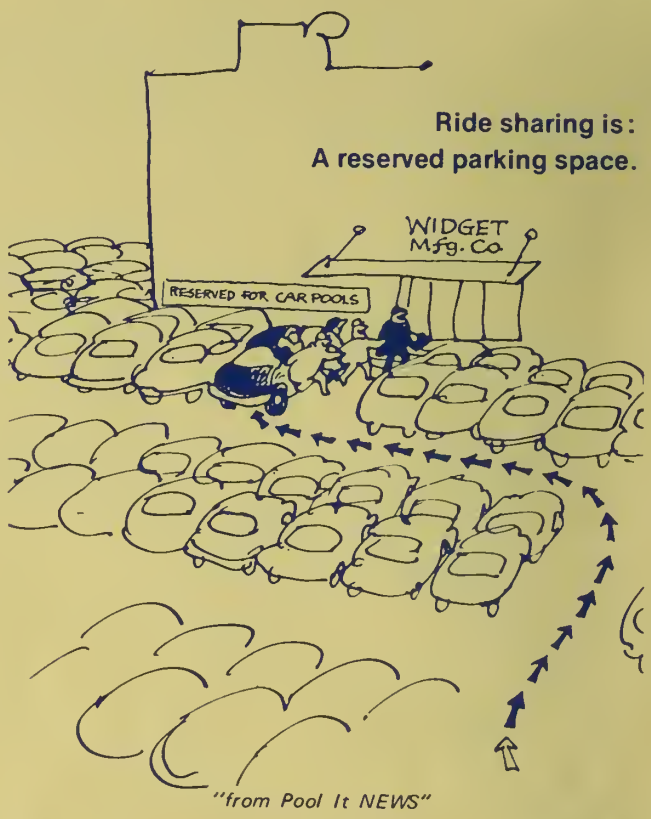
To promote the use of carpools, DOT's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has begun a nationwide promotional campaign aimed at employers. Businessmen are being urged to help develop ride-sharing programs for their employees.

Sponsored by FHWA and the Highway Users Federation for Safety and Mobility, the campaign's directors have already mailed a promotional packet to 60,000 companies employing at least 100 persons. Included are *How to Pool It* (a manual for employers) and *Pool It NEWS* (a newsletter to be issued every other month).

For copies of this material and additional information, employers may write to Pool It NEWS, Room 435, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, or call (202) 833-5884.

While energy conservation is the primary goal of the ride-sharing campaign, a Gallup survey sponsored by Highway Users Federation showed that commuters are likely to be even more impressed with figures telling how much money they can save by carpooling (see chart, below). In the poll, 51% of the respondents thought the most likely incentive for carpooling is to show that commuters can save money. An additional 24% indicated that the best incentive is data showing how the country's energy supplies can be conserved; and 16% believed that people would be most swayed by arguments that carpooling would relieve traffic congestion.

The ride-sharing campaign aimed at employers is being coordinated with the "Double Up, America" campaign sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation through the Advertising Council.



"from Pool It NEWS"

CARPOOL AND SAVE MONEY

SEE HOW MUCH CAR EXPENSE YOU CAN SAVE IN ONE YEAR BY CARPOOLING

HOME TO WORK	ITEM	SUBCOMPACT [PINTO, DATSUN, VEGA, VW, COLT]	COMPACT [NOVA, DART, MAVERICK, PACER]	STANDARD MATADOR, CUTLASS, LTD, CAPRICE]
10 MILES	COST OF DRIVING TO WORK ALONE			
	GASOLINE AND OIL	$128	$176	$234
	MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR	97	109	130
	PARKING	145	145	145
	INSURANCE	166	176	189
	DEPRECIATION	110	143	250
	TOTAL	$646	$749	$948
	SAVINGS PER PERSON IN A:			
	2-PERSON CARPOOL	$281	$332	$427
	3-PERSON CARPOOL	361	427	553
	4-PERSON CARPOOL	402	474	617
	5-PERSON CARPOOL	425	502	654

NEW MARKER INDICATES LANES RESERVED FOR BUSES, CARPOOLS

This sign is now being used throughout the country to indicate special highway lanes reserved for buses and carpools.

In an effort to conserve energy, many communities are urging commuters to take buses or to carpool, rather than driving their own cars. As an incentive, preferential highway lanes are being set aside for buses and for cars carrying three or more (or four or more) commuters.

All such preferential lanes can now be marked with this new highway sign which has been designed and approved by DOT's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). You may see the elongated diamond-shaped symbol painted on the pavement or on roadside signs or on overhead signs hanging above the reserved lanes.

Detailed drawings and information on installing these signs are available to State and local traffic authorities, trade associations, consumer commuter organizations, and industry groups. Write to FHWA, Office of Traffic Operations, Traffic Controls Systems Division (HTO-21), Washington, D.C. 20590; or call (202) 426-0411.

NHTSA Plugs in Hotline (Continued from page 1)

NHTSA is particularly interested in having consumers use the hotline to report their experiences with vehicle failures, component failures, and other safety-related problems.

Officials hope the experimental telephone service will prove useful enough for both consumers and NHTSA that the agency will decide it would be justified in setting up a permanent hotline to service the entire Nation.

WANT TO RECEIVE IT REGULARLY?

Transportation Topics is published quarterly. Free subscriptions are available to consumers and consumer-oriented groups, as well as public-interest and private organizations concerned with transportation. To place your name on the mailing list, send your request to Office of Consumer Affairs (TES-40), Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590.

CONSUMERS VOICE CONCERNS ON TRANSPORTATION, FOR THE RECORD

DOT's Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) has released a report summing up three years of public hearings at which consumers throughout the Nation expressed their concerns about their transportation problems.

Between 1971 and 1974, DOT Director of Consumer Affairs, Ann Uccello, set up 54 open meetings throughout the Nation, providing a forum where more than 4,000 persons testified on consumers' transportation needs. Many witnesses represented local associations or widespread organizations of consumer groups.

OCA's report on the hearings—titled *The Voice of the Transportation Consumer*—covers a broad range of topics. These include automobiles, aviation, railroads, buses, bicycles, rapid transit, highways, special problems of the elderly and the handicapped, citizen participation in transportation planning, and government's role in fulfilling consumers' transportation needs.

The complete report, totaling over 600 pages, is available for purchase and so is an executive summary of more than 100 pages. The full report (#PB 241765) costs $15.25 per copy; executive summary (#PB 241764) costs $5.25. To order either publication, write to National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151.

FAA CLARIFIES ELECTRONICS RULE

DOT's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has clarified its rule regarding use of portable electronic calculators on airliners or other aircraft operating under instrument flight rules (IFR) [see *Transportation Topics*, May 1975].

FAA points out that there are certain exemptions to its regulation prohibiting the operation of portable electronic devices on aircraft. These exemptions include portable voice recorders, hearing aids, heart pacemakers, electric shavers—and any other portable electronic device that will not, in the judgment of the airline or the aircraft operator, interfere with the aircraft's navigation or communication systems.

Therefore, airline passengers wishing to use portable electronic calculators may do so if the airline approves. Passengers who fly on other aircraft operating under IFR must seek approval of the pilot in command if they wish to use portable electronic calculators.

As background, FAA explains that in January 1973 it issued a proposed rule which would have added calculators to the list of items exempted from the agency's general ban on using portable electronic devices on aircraft. The proposal was based on a petition submitted by the Air Transport Association of America.

However, after considering comments on the proposed rule and other evidence, the agency withdrew the proposal. FAA decided that a blanket exemption was not in the best interest of safety. Thus, decisions on the use of electronic calculators are still left to the discretion of the airline or the aircraft operator.

ENERGY-SAVING TIP In highway driving try to maintain a steady speed. Unnecessary acceleration and deceleration waste gasoline.

This is the first Standard Light Rail Vehicle (SLRV). In 1971, DOT's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) sponsored a program to develop specifications for the SLRV. The following year, the Boeing Vertol Company was awarded a contract to design and manufacture 230 LRVs for San Francisco and Boston.

These new cars were designed to the specifications of the Standard Light Rail Vehicle and are now being manufactured by Boeing. The pantograph stretching above the LRV's roof carries power to the vehicle from overhead electric lines. ***Photo—Boeing Vertol Company.***

In Dusseldorf, Germany, various types of LRVs are used. This one has "articulated" sections, allowing it to bend in the middle. This increases vehicle length and passenger capacity without requiring additional right-of-way or on-board employees.

On another light rail line in Dusseldorf, a number of cars are coupled together. Notice elevated roadway that separates express traffic from local in-city vehicles on street level.

This is one of several light rail lines operating in Philadelphia and its suburbs. An LRT route running through parkland like this can carry more than 4,000 passengers into the city during rush-hour; a three-lane road would be needed to accommodate the same number of people traveling in private cars.

In Boston, park-and-ride areas are provided beside light rail lines for the convenience of those who choose this mode for getting into center city.

LIGHT RAIL—A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO MASS TRANSIT

Today they're called light rail vehicles (LRVs), but way-back-when, they were streetcars or trolleys. Up to the end of World War II, many Americans rode them daily to work, to shops and to school in cities of every size. In most places, however, streetcar systems were abandoned as the automobile took over city streets and suburban roads.

Today, though, the trolley is making a comeback. With its new LRV label, modern technology, and a streamlined silhouette [see large photo, page 4], the trolley is capturing the interest of public transit officials in more and more U.S. cities. Dayton, Ohio, is planning to install a light rail transit (LRT) system to help solve its mass transit crunch, and Rochester, New York, is considering one. San Francisco and Boston—two cities that never abandoned streetcars—have ordered new light rail vehicles as replacements for some of their old President's Conference Committee (PCC) streetcars designed in the 1930's, and last built in 1952.

None of this is surprising if you consider the advantages offered by LRT:

- A new LRT system is cheaper to build than a new rapid rail system (subway or elevated).
- An LRT system is cheaper to run than a bus system.
- LRT is easier on the environment than other mass transit modes.

Environmentally, LRVs are desirable because, being electrically powered, they do not pollute. Moreover, they operate on a narrow right-of-way, cause little distortion to the landscape, and create far less disruption during construction than do subways. LRT's thriftier operation stems from the fact that several cars can be coupled together to form a train run by a single motorman, similar to conventional rapid transit operation.

Because of the growing interest in light rail transit, a recent LRT conference attracted 600 participants, almost three times as many as were originally expected. Sponsored by DOT's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council, the American Public Transit Association, and the University of Pennsylvania, the conference met in Philadelphia last June.

Conferees discussed the status of light rail in Europe where interest in light rail transit never waned. This is partly because the automobile did not take over as early, nor quite as thoroughly, as here. A slide show screened at the conference highlighted current operating practices, vehicles, and types of rights-of-way. Eight U.S. cities—Philadelphia, Newark, Shaker Heights (Ohio), Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, New Orleans, Boston, and San Francisco—have maintained their light rail operations because they are important links in their respective transit operations, and because the systems carry a large number of riders every day.

If the conference attendance is any indication, more American cities may be gearing up to get the trolleys moving again, and someday light rail vehicles may become a fixture on the urban scene once again.

(Unless otherwise noted, photos on these pages are from a slide show produced by the Transportation Research Board.)

In a Pittsburgh suburb, this light rail stop provides a transit shelter for waiting passengers.

Interiors of Pittsburgh's PCC type streetcars have been rebuilt and refurbished, contributing to a positive image for light rail transit.

COLEMAN TURNS DOWN HIGHWAY SEGMENT TO FAVOR ENVIRONMENT, MASS TRANSIT

In what may prove a far-reaching decision with implications for many U.S. communities, Secretary of Transportation William T. Coleman, Jr., refused to approve construction of the proposed 10-mile segment of Interstate Route I-66 that would run from the Capital Beltway (Interstate 495) to the District of Columbia. The decision —announced early in August—marked the first time a Transportation Secretary had disapproved a section of the Interstate Highway System.

As his major reasons for disapproval, the Secretary stated that Metropolitan Washington has better transportation alternatives than extension of I-66. The region will have more efficient transportation and better environmental quality, he said, if existing roads and highways in the I-66 corridor are improved and if the Metro subway system is extended to Vienna, Virginia.

"This is simply the wrong time and the wrong place for an otherwise excellent project," said Secretary Coleman.

Among the considerations on which the Secretary based his decision were the pros and cons involved in the following issues: how essential I-66 is to the Interstate Highway System; the comparative efficiency of alternative transportation plans; the needs of the urban community; environmental/energy considerations; and the relationships of I-66 to Metro and access to Dulles International Airport. The Secretary pointed out that I-66's extension had been opposed by all local Virginia communities through which it would have passed.

In the introduction to his written decision, Secretary Coleman stated: "I have set forth the reasons for my decision in some detail because of the substantial public interest in this issue and the delicate State-Federal relationships here involved, and what I regard as the obligations of public officials to set forth convincing reasons for our decisions in sufficient detail to allow the validity of those reasons to be critically examined."

For a copy of the complete text of Secretary Coleman's decision, write to Office of Public Affairs (S-80), Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590; or call (202) 426-4321.

ENERGY-SAVING TIP Don't let the gas station attendant "top off" your tank by filling it to the brim after the nozzle's automatic shutoff stops the flow. This often results in overflow and wasted gasoline.

CITIZENS' COMMITTEE SEES PUBLIC ATTITUDE KEY TO TRANSPORTATION ENERGY CONSERVATION

"The key to energy conservation in this country lies in the attitude of the American people."

With these words, DOT's Citizens' Advisory Committee on Transportation Quality summed up its recent statement of recommendations on conserving transportation energy. Meeting in Washington, D.C., in June, the Committee recommended to the Department that DOT:

- Undertake an intensive public relations program to promote the 55 mph speed limit.
- Sponsor town meetings to educate the public on energy conservation.
- Study financial incentives to increase individual carpool use.
- Expand jitney and taxi service in local communities.
- Give priority to cooperative efforts with the automobile industry to lower maximum speedometer readings and new automobile speed capabilities.

The Committee went on record as opposed to the Department's proposed requirements for State certification of enforcement of the national maximum speed limit, asserting that "certification by the Governor is sufficient to meet the requirements of the statute (Federal-Aid Highway Act Amendments of 1974), and that the Federal Government should not become involved in the operations of State highways and law enforcement."

During the course of the two-day meeting, the Committee met with Secretary William T. Coleman, Jr., and Deputy Secretary John W. Barnum, and also toured a Washington, D.C., Metro subway station under construction (see photo below).

Committee members question a D.C. Metro official on subway design and passenger amenities in the Gallery Place station.

Coleman Urges More Say For Consumers

(Continued from page 1)

- The operating administrations should give the public opportunity for comment when making rules which have substantial public interest, even when Federal regulations exempt the rules from such comment. [Examples of such exemptions include rules relating to public property, loans, grants, benefits, or contracts.]

The recommendations are the result of a study—*Consumer Involvement in Rulemaking*—undertaken by OCA to determine how best to attain consumer participation in the Department's decisions.

Secretary Coleman also urged DOT agencies to make extensive use of other techniques suggested in the OCA study—such as making direct contact with consumer groups in order to increase citizen participation in DOT's rulemaking and decision-making processes.

Consumer Involvement in Rulemaking (#PB 241575) may be obtained at a cost of $3.75 from National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151.

FAA SEEKS COMMENTS FROM CONSUMERS TO DEVELOP AIRPORT NOISE POLICY

Are curfews an appropriate method for dealing with noise problems at airports?

What about limiting the total number of operations at airports to reduce noise?

Should the government ban aircraft that do not meet Federal noise standards—or prohibit all jet operations?

These and other questions have been posed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in an effort to elicit comments on the issue of noise from the general public as well as from the aviation community. The replies will be studied by the agency as it seeks to develop a national Airport Noise Policy. Comments will be accepted until January 1, 1976.

FAA points out that the question of airport noise has been the subject of extensive litigation in the courts; but the agency believes that establishment of a national policy should not be the product of scattered judicial decisions. Rather, such policy should be developed by FAA in a coordinated manner that gives equal emphasis to the various competing interests of States and local communities.

Accordingly, FAA is asking consumers to comment on a number of specific questions, including these:

(1) What benefits in terms of noise reduction could be anticipated as a result of restricting airport use?

(2) What other airport restrictions might be considered (in addition to those listed in the introduction above)?

(3) What costs could be anticipated as a result of such restrictions?

(4) Should any types of aircraft be exempted from such restrictions and, if so, why?

(5) Which of the four policy options below should be adopted or rejected by FAA, and why?

(a) Airport operators would be permitted to impose any restrictions they want, as long as such restrictions do not impinge on Federal responsibilities for aircraft operating procedures and the management and control of the navigable airspace.

(b) FAA would develop a comprehensive Federal regulatory program of noise abatement that would be instituted at individual airports to minimize noise problems.

(c) Public operators would be required to prepare a local noise abatement plan and submit it to FAA for review and approval.

(d) Present "ad hoc" efforts would be continued, in an effort to reduce aircraft noise at its source through development of appropriate technology, as well as development of noise abatement operating procedures. (Here, initiative would be left to local airport operators; but FAA would take appropriate actions where restrictions constitute an undue burden on interstate commerce or interfere with aircraft operating procedures or control of navigable airspace.)

Send comments, before January 1, 1976, to: Associate Administrator for Policy Development and Review, Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, D.C. 20591; Attention: Airport Noise Policy. The text of FAA's notice, as published in the *Federal Register* (July 9, 1975), may be obtained from the same address.

In addition to requesting written comments, FAA expects to hold regional public hearings on this issue.

NEW DOT RULES

To keep you up to date on new DOT rules and notices of special concern to consumers, *Transportation Topics* presents these summaries of selected final actions:

- NHTSA rule issued May 21, 1975, establishes uniform tire quality grading standards designed to help consumers make informed choices when purchasing passenger car tires. Eight tire companies are challenging the validity of the rule, claiming that it goes beyond the authority granted to NHTSA in the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. A Federal court in Cincinnati has granted a stay of the rule's effective dates, pending review of claims of the tire companies. The rule calls for three effective dates: all radial tires to be graded by January 1, 1976; all bias-belted tires by July 1, 1976; all bias ply tires by January 1, 1977. Under the rule, by those dates, grades must appear on paper tread labels (on all except original equipment tires) and in consumer information pamphlets.

- FAA regulations, announced July 11, 1975, require that foreign airlines flying into the U.S. must establish the same types of security programs for screening passengers as are already used by U.S. airlines. Effective October 9, 1975, every foreign air carrier must have in effect a security program for flights to, from, and within the U.S. that

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FAA Initiates Consumer Mail List

(Continued from page 1)

these events are regularly announced in the *Federal Register*, many persons and groups do not receive that publication.

To place your name on FAA's new consumer mailing list, fill in the coupon below and mail it to Federal Aviation Administration, Community and Consumer Liaison Division (AIS-400), 800 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20591.

If you represent an organization, please attach a separate sheet giving a description of the group and its membership; this will help FAA to meet your specific needs.

FAA Consumer Mail List

Date / /

Organization or name

Title or Department

Street or P.O. Number

City, State, Zip Code

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM DOT

For your information, *Transportation Topics* presents this list of selected consumer-related publications, reports, and other materials published by DOT during the past few months.

Automotive Jacks (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)—Consumer booklet describing types of jacks and giving safety tips. For free copy, write to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Battery Hazards (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)—Consumer fact sheet dealing with explosions and jump starting. For free copy, write to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Consumer Protection Under the New Antitampering Odometer Law (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)—Folder explaining consumer protection and redress. For free copy, write to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Study (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)—Folder summing up findings and recommendations of study. For free copy, write to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Motor Vehicle Safety Defect Recall Campaigns (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)—DOT's annual report, for 1974, of 247 defect campaigns in which more than 2 million domestic vehicles and 500,000 foreign vehicles were recalled. Also includes recalls of motor vehicle equipment items such as tires, jacks, and child seats. Order from U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (#5003-00216; $1.65).

Innovation in Public Transportation (Urban Mass Transportation Administration)—Directory of research, development, and demonstration projects sponsored and funded by UMTA from June 1972 to June 1974. Order from U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (#050-014-00004; $2.30).

UMTA Research Reports (Urban Mass Transportation Administration)—List of 16 new reports on university research projects funded by UMTA. For list of titles and prices, write to Office of Public Affairs, UMTA, DOT, Washington, D.C. 20590; request press release #75-61.

Voice of the Transportation Consumer (Office of Consumer Affairs)—See article, page 3, this issue.

Secretary's decision on Route I-66—See article, page 6, this issue.

New DOT Rules (Continued from page 7)

utilizes weapon-detection procedures for screening passengers and carry-on items before boarding. In addition, the regulations call for procedures in the handling of bomb threats and/or air piracy threats.

- NHTSA notice issued May 7, 1975, announced that the agency would not change its standard for automobile bumper systems by reducing the requirements for both front and rear impacts to 2½ miles per hour (mph), as had previously been proposed. The proposal was based on the results of two agency-sponsored studies which indicated that the cost and weight of many current production bumpers, in light of inflation and fuel shortages, made the bumpers no longer cost-beneficial. But information presented at public hearings on the proposal brought to light additional data supporting a decision by NHTSA not to reduce the impact speeds. Bumper requirements will continue to call for protection against damage in front and rear crashes at a speed of 5 miles per hour.

The Secretary of Transportation has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of this Department. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget through August 30, 1977.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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